THE RETURN OF A PRIVATE.

The nearer the train drew toward La Crosse the soberer the little group of "vets' became. On the long way from New Orleans they had beguiled tedium with lokes and friendly chaff, or with planning with elaborate detail what they were going to do now, after the war. A long journey, slowly, irregularly, yet persistently pushnorthward. When they en-Wisconsin territory they gave a cheer, and another when reached Madison, but after that they sank into a dumb expectancy. Comrades dropped off at one or two points beyond, until there were only four or five

left who were bound for La Crosse county. Three of them were gaunt and brown the fourth was gaunt and pale, with signs of fever and ague upon him. One had a great scar down his temple, one limped, and they all had unnaturally large bright eyes, showing emeciation. There were no banks of gaily-dressed ladies waving handkerchiefs and shouting "bravo," as they came in on the caboose of a freight train into the towns that had cheered and blared at them on their way to war. As they looked out or stepped upon the plat-form for a moment, as the train stood at the station, the loafers looked at them indifferently. Their blue coats, dusty and grimy, were too familiar now to excite nolice, much less a friendly word. They were the last of the army to return, and the loafers were surfeited with such sights. The train jogged forward so slowly that it seemed likely to be midnight before they should reach La Crosse. The little squad of "vets" grumbled and swore, but it was no use, the train would not hurry, and as a matter of fact, it was nearly 2 o'clock when the engine whistled "down brakes."

Most of the group were farmers living in districts several miles out of town, and all "Now, boys," said private Smith, he of the fever and ague, 'we are landed in La Crosse in the night. We've got to stay somewhere till mornin'. Now I ain't got no 82 to waste on a hotel. I've got a wife and children, so I'm goin' to roost on a bench, and take the cost of a bed out of my

same bara," put in one of the other me "Hide'll grow on again, dollars come hard. It's goin' to be mighty hot skirmishin' to find a dollar these days

"Don't think they'll be a deputation of citizens waitin' to scort us to a hotel, eh?" said another. His sarcasm was too obvions to require an answer. Smith went on: "Then at daybreak we'll start f'r home; at least, I will." "Well, I'll be dumned if I'll take \$2 out, o' my hide." one of the younger men said.

"I'm goin' to a hotel of I don't never lay up "That'll do f'r you." said Smith; "but if you had a wife an' three young'uns dependin' on yeh-" "Which I ain't, thank the Lord! and don't intend havin' while the court knows

The station was deserted, chill and dark as they came into it at exactly a quarter to 2 in the morning. Lit by the oil lamps that flared a dull red light over the dingy benches, the waiting-room was not an inviting place. The younger man went of to look up a hotel, while the rest remained and prepared to camp down on the floor and benches. Smith was attended to tenderly by the other men, who spread their blankets on the bench for him, and by robbing themselves made quite a comfortable bed, though the narrowness of the bench made his sleeping precarious.

It was chill, though August, and the two men sitting with bowed heads grew stiff with cold and weariness, and were forced to rise now and again, and walk about to warm their stiffened limbs. It didn't occur to them, probably, to contrast their coming home with their going forth, or with the coming home of the generals, olonels, or even captains-but to private mith, at any rate, there came a sickness at heart almost deadly, as he lay there on his hard bed and went over his situation. In the deep of the night, lying on a board in the town where he had enlisted three years

ago, all elation and enthusiasm gone out of him, he faced the fact that with the joy of home-coming was mingled the bitter juice of care. He saw himself sick, worn out, taking up the work on his half-cleared farm, the inevitable mortgage standing ready with open jaw to swallow half his earnings. He had given three years of his life for a mere pittance of pay, and now-Morning dawned at last, slowly, with a

pale vellow dome of light rising silently bove the bluffs which stand like some juge battlemented castle, just east of the city. Out to the left the great river swept on its massive, yet silent, way to the south. Javs called across the river from hillside to hillside through the clear, beautiful air, and hawks began to skim the tops of the The two vets were astir early, but orivate Smith had fallen at last into a sleep and they went out without waking He lay on his knapsack, his gaunt ace turned toward the ceiling, his hands clasped on his breast, with a curious, pathetic effect of weakness and appeal. An engine switching near awoke him at last, and he slowly sat up and stared about. the sun was lighting the hills across the river. He rose and brushed his hair as well as be could, folded his blankets up and went out to find his companions. They stood gazing silently at the river and at the hills.

"Looks nat'ral, dont't it," they said, as he came out. "That's what it does," he replied. "An' it looks good. D'yeh see that peak?" He pointed at a beautiful symmetrical peak. rising like a slightly truncated cone, so high that it seemed the very highest of them all. It was lighted by the morning sun till it glowed like a beacon, and a light scarf of gray morning fog was rolling up its shadowed side.

"My farm's just beyond that. Now, ef I can only ketch a ride, we'll be home by "I'm talkin' about breakfast," said one of

the others. "I guess it's one more meal o' hardtack f'r me," said Smith. They forged around and finally found a restaurant with a sleepy old German behind the counter, and procured some coffee, which they drank to wash down their hardtack. "Time'll come," said Smith, holding up a piece by the corner, "when this'll be a

curiosity.

"I hope to God it will! I bet I've chawed hardtack enough to shingle every house in the coolly. I've chawed it when my lampers was down and when they wasn't. I've took it dry, soaked and mashed. I've had it wormy, musty, sour and blue-moldy. I've had it in little bits and big bits; 'fore coffee an' after coffee. I'm ready f'r a change. I'd like t' git hol' jest about now o' some of the hot biscuits my wife c'n make when she lays herself out f'r company." "Well, if you set there gablin', you'll never see your wife."

"Come on," said private Smith. "Wait a moment, boys; less take suthin'. Its on He led them to the rusty tin dipper which hung on a nail beside the wooden water pail, and they grinned and drank. (Things were primitive in La Crosse then.)
Then shouldering their blankets and muskets, which they were "taking home to the boys," they struck out on their last

"They called that coffee. Jayvy." grumbled one of them, "but it never went by the road where government Jayvy resides. I reckon I know coffee from peas.

They kept together on the road along the turnpike, and up the winding road by the river, which they followed for some miles. The river was very lovely, curving down along its sandy beds, pausing now and then under broad bass-wood trees, or rupning in dark, swift silent, currents under tangles of wild grape-vines, and drooping alders, and haw trees. At one of these lovely spots the three vets sat down on the thick green eward to rest "on Smith's account." The leaves of the trees were as fresh and green as June, the jays called cheery greetings to them, and kingfishers darted to and fro with swooping, noiseless flight, "I tell yeb, boye, this knocks the swamps

of Loueesiana into kingdom come." "You bet. All they on raise down there

is snakes, niggers, and p'rticler hell."

"An' fightin' men," put in the older man.

"An' fightin' men. If I had a good hook an' line I'd sneak a pick'rel out o' that pond. Say, remember that time I shot that alliga-

"I guess we'd better be crawlin' along." his knapsack with considerable effort, which he tried to hide.

"Say, Smith, lemme give you a lift on But, yeh see, I may not have from him. She had seen by the papers that I

a chance right off to pay yeh back for the times ye've carried my gan and hull caboo-Say, now, give me that gun, any-"All right, if yeh feel like it, Jim," Smith

replied, and they trudged along doggedly in the sun, which was getting higher and hotter each half mile. "Aint it queer they aint no teams comin' Well, no. seen's it's Sunday." "By jinks, that's a fact! It is Sunday.
I'll git home in time f'r dinner, sure. She

don't hev dinner usially till about one on Sundays." And he fell into a muse, in which he smiled. "Well, I'll git home jest about six o'clock, est about when the boys are milkin' the cows," said old Jim Cranby. "I'll step into An' then won't they yell," he added, slap-

Smith went on. "I'll jest go up the path. Old Rover'll come down the road to meet me. He won't bark; he'll know me, an' he'll come down waggin' his tail an' showin' his teeth. That's his way of languin'. An' so I'll walk up to the kitchen door, an' I'll say, 'Dinner fr a hungry man!' An' then she'll jump up. an'-" He couldn't go on. His voice choked at

the thought of it. Saunders, the third man, hardly uttered a word. He walked silenty behind the others. He had lost his wife. the first year he was in the army. She died of pneumonia, caught in the autumn rains, while working in the fields on his

They plodded along till at last they came to a parting of the ways. To the right the road continued up the main valley; to the left it went over the ridge.
"Well, boys," began Smith, as they grounded their muskets and looked away up the walley, "here's where we shake hands. We've marched together a good many miles.

an' now I s'pose we're done."
"Yes, I don't think we'll do any more of it fra while, I don't want to, I know." "I hope I'll see yeh, once in a while, boys, to talk over old times." "Of course," said Saunders, whose voice trembled a little, too. "It ain't exactly

like dvin' "But we'd ought'r go home with you," said the younger man. "You never'll climb that ridge with all them things on yer back. "Oh, I'm all right! Don't worry about me. Every step takes me nearer home, ye see. Well, good-bye, boys."

They shook hands. "Good-bye. Good "Same to you. Lemme know how you find things at home." He turned once before they passed out of sight, and waved his cap, and they did the same, and all yelled. Then all marched away with their long, steady, loping, veteran step. The solitary climber in blue walked on for a time, with his mind filled with the kindness of his comrades, and musing upon the many jolly days they had had together in camp and field.

He thought of his chum, Billy Trip. Poor Billy! A "minie" ball fell into his breast one day, fell wailing like a cat, and tore a great ragged hole into his heart. He looked for-ward to a sad scene with Billy's mother and sweetheart. They would want to know all about it. He tried to recall all that Billy had said, and the particulars of it. but there was little to remember, just that wild wailing sound, high in the air, a dull slap, a short, quick, expulsive groan, and the boy lay with his face in the dirt in the enghed field they were marching across. That was all. But all the scenes he had since been through had not dimmed the horror, the terror of that moment, when his boy comrade fell, with only a breath between a laugh and a death-groan. Poor.

handsome Billy! Worth millions of dollars was his young life. These somber recollections gave way at length to more cheerful feelings as he began to approach his home coule. The fields and houses grew familiar, and in one or two he was greeted by people seated in the doorway, but he was in no mood to talk, and pushed on steadily, though he stopped and accepted a drink of milk once at the

well-side of a neighbor. The sun was getting hot on the slope. and his step grew slower, in spite of his iron resolution. He sat down several times to rest. Slowly he crawled up the rough, reddish-brown road, which wound along the hillside, under great trees, through dense groves jack oaks, with tree-tops far below him on his left hand, and the hills far above him on his right. He crawled along like some minute wingless vairety of fly. He ate some hardtack, sauced with wild berries, when he reached the summit of the ridge, and sat there for some time, looking down into his home coule.

Sombre, pathetic figure! His wide, round. gray eyes gazing down into the beautiful valley, seeing and not seeing, the splendid cloud-shadows sweeping over the western hills, and across the green and yellow wheat far below. His head drooped forward on his palm, his shoulders took on a tired stoop, his cheek bones showed painfully. An observer might have said, "He is looking down upon his own grave.'

Sunday comes in a Western wheat harvest with such sweet and sudden relaxation to man and beast that it would be holy for that reason, if no other. And Sundays are usually fair in harvest time. As one goes out into the field in the hot morning He looked out of the window and saw that | sunshine, with no sound abroad save the crickets and the indescribably pleasant, silken rustling of the ripened grain, the reaper and the very sheaves in the stubble seem to be resting, dreaming.

Around the house, in the shade of the trees, the men sit, smoking, dozing, or reading the papers, while the women, never resting, move about at the housework. The men eat on Sundays about the same as on other days, and breakfast is no sooner over and out of the way than dinner begins.

But at the Smith farm there were no men dozing or reading. Mrs. Smith was alone with her three children, Mary, nine, Tommy, six, and little Ted, just past four. Her farm, rented to a neighbor, lay at the head of a coule or narrow gulley, made at some far-off post-glacial period by the vast and angry floods of water which gullied these tremendous furrows in the level prairie-furrows so deep that undisturbed portions of the original level rose like hills on either side-rose to quite considerable mountains.

The chickens wakened her as usual that Sabbath morning from dreams of her absent husband, from whom she had not heard for weeks. The shadow drifted over the hills, down the slopes, across the wheat and up the opposite wall in leisurely way, as if, being Sunday, they could "take it easy." also. The fowls clustered about the housewife as she went out into the yard. Fuzzy little chickens swarmed out from the coops where their clucking and perpetually dis-gruntled mothers tramped about, petulantly thrusting their heads through the spaces between the slats.

A cow called in a deep, musical bass, and a calf answered from a little pen near by. and a pig scurried guiltily out of the cabbages. Seeing all this, seeing the pig in the cabbages, the tangle of grass in the garden, the broken fence which she had mended again and again-the little woman, hardly more than a girl, sat down and cried. The bright Sabbath morning was only a mockery

without him! A few years ago they had bought this farm, paying part, mortgaging the rest in the usual way. Edward Smith was a man of terrible energy. He worked "nights and Sundays," as the saying goes, to clear the farm of its brush and of its insatiate mortgage. In the midst of his herculean struggle came the call for volunteers, and with the grim and unselfish devotion to his country which made the Eagle Brigade able to "whip its weight in wild cats," he threw down his seythe and his grub-ax. turned his cattle loose, and became a blue-coated cog in a vast machine for killing men, and not thistles. While the millionaire sent his money to England for safe-keeping, this man, with his girlwife and three babies, left them on a mortgaged farm, and went away to fight for an idea. It was foolish, but it was sublime,

for all that. That was three years before, and the young wife, sitting on the well-curb on this bright Sabbath harvest morning, was righteonely rebellious. It seemed to her that she had borne her share of the country's sorrow. Two brothers had been killed. the renter in whose hands her ansband had left the farm had proved the villain, one year the farm was without crops, and now the over-ripe grain was waiting the tardy hand of the neighbor who had rented it, and who was cutting his own grain first. About six weeks before she had received a letter saying. "We'll be discharged in a little while." But no other word had come

his army was being discharged, and from pay to day, other soldiers slowly percolated in blue streams back into the State and county, but still her private did not return.

Each week she had told the children that he was coming, and she had watched the road so long that it had become uncon-scious. As she stood at the well or by the kitchen door, her eyes were fixed unthinkingly on the road that wound down the coule. Nothing wears on the human soul like waiting. If the stranded mariner, searching the sunbright seas, could once give up hope of a ship, that horrible grinding on his brain would cease. It was this waiting, hoping, on the edge of despair,

that gave Emma Smith no rest.

Neighbors said, with kind intentions, "He's sick, may be, an' can't start North just yet. He'll come along one o' these

"Why don't he write?" was her question, which silenced them all. This Sunday morning it seemed to her as if she couldn't stand it any longer. The house seemed in-tolerably lonely. So she dressed the little ones in their best calico dresses and homemade jackets, and, closing up the house, set off down the coule to old Mother Gray's. "Old Widder Gray" lived at the "mouth of the coolly." She was a widow woman with a large family of stalwart boys and laughing girls. She was the visible incarnation of hospitality and optimistic poverty. With Western open-heartedness she fed every mouth that asked food of her, and worked herself to death as cheerfully as her girls danced in the neighborhood harvest dances.

Smith with a smile on her face that would have made the countenance of a convict expand. "Oh, you little dears! Come right to yer granny. Gimme a kiss! Come right in. Mis' Smith. Hew are yeh, anyway? Nice mornin', ain't it? Come in an' set down. Everything's in a clutter, but that won't

scare you any."

She waddled down the path to meet Mrs.

She led the way into the "best room," a sunny, square room, carpeted with a faded and patched rag carpet, and papered with a horrible white-and-green-striped wall paper, where a few ghastly effigies of dead members of the family hung in variously sized oval walnut frames. The house resounded with singing, laughter, whistling, tramping of boots and scufflings. Half-grown boys came to the door and crooked their fingers at the children, who ran out, and were soon heard in the midst of the fun.
"Don't s'pose you've heard from Ed?"
Mrs. Smith shook her head. "He'll turn up and doubt, she hurried up the coule as fast some day, when you ain't lookin' for 'm." The good old soul had said that so many times that poor Mrs. Smith derived no comfort from it any longer.

"Did he say anything of—"
"No, he didn't," Mrs. Gray admitted. But then, it was only a short letter, anyhow. Al ain't much for ritin', anyhow. But come out and see my new cheese. I tell yeh, I don't believe I ever had better luck in my life. If Ed should come I want you should take him up a piece of this

"Liz heard from Al the other day. He's

comin' some day this week. Anyhow, they

It was beyond human nature to resist the influence of that noisy, hearty, loving household, and in the midst of the singing and laughing the wife forgot her anxiety. for the time at least, and laughed and sang

About 11 o'clock a wagon-load more drove up to the door, and Bill Gray, the widow's oldest son, and his whole family, from Sand Lake Coule, piled out amid a good-natured nproar, as characteristic as it was ludicrous. Every one talked at once, except Bill, who sat in the wagon with his wrists on his knees, a straw in his mouth, and an amused twinkle in his blue eyes "Ain't heard nothin' o' Ed, I s'pose?" he asked in a kind of bellow. Mrs. Smith shook her head. Bill, with a delicacy very

striking in such a great giant, rolled his quid in his mouth, and said: "Didn't know but what you had. I bear two or three of the Sand Lake boys are comin'. Left New Orleenes some time this week. Didn't write nothin' about Ed, but no news is good news in such cases, mother

always savs." "Well, go put out your team," said Mrs. Gray, "an' go'n bring me in some taters, an', Sim, you go see if you c'n find some corn. Sadie, you put on the water to bile. Come, now, hustle yer boots, all o' yeh. If I feed this yer crowd, we've got to have some raw materials. If y' think I'm goin' to feed yeh on pie-

The children went off into the fields, the girls put dinner on to "bile" and then went to change their dresses and fix their hair. 'Somebody might come," they said. "Land sakes, I hope not! I don't know where in time I'd set 'em, 'less they'd eat at the secont table," Mrs. Gray laughed, in pretended dismay.

The two older boys, who had served their time in the army, lay out on the grass before the house, and whittled and talked desultorily about the war and the crops, and planned buying a threshing-machine. The older girls and Mrs. Smith helped enlarge the table and put on the dishes, talking all the time in that cheery, incoherent, and meaningful way a group of such women have-a conversation to be taken for its spirit rather than for its letter, though Mrs. Gray at last got the ear of them all and dis-

sertated at length on girls, "Girls in love aint no use in the whole blessed week," she said. "Sundays they're a lookin' down the road, expectin' he'll come. Sunday afternoons they can't think o' nothin' else, 'cause he's here. Monday mornin's they're sleepy and kind o' dreamy and slimpsy, and good f'r nothin' on Tuesday and Wednesday. Thursday they git absent-minded, an' begin to look off towards Sunday agin, an' mope aroun' and let the dish-water git cold, right under their noses. Friday they break dishes, and go off in the best room an' snivel, an' look ont o' the winder. Saturdays they have queer spurts o' workin' like all p'sessed

spurts o' frizzin' their hair. An' Sunday they begin it all over agin."
The girls giggled and blushed all through this tirade from their mother, their broad faces and powerful frames anything but suggestive of lackadaisical sentiment. But 'Now, Mrs. Gray, I hadn't ought to stay

for dinner. You've got-"Now you set right down! If any of them girls' beaus comes, they'll have to take what's left, that's all. They aint s'posed to have much appetite, nohow. No, you're goin' to stay if they starve, an' they aint no danger o' that."

At 1 o'clock the long table was piled with boiled potatoes, cords of boiled corn on the cob, squash and pumpkin pies, hot biscuit, sweet pickles, bread and butter, and honey, Then one of the girls took down a conch sheel from a nail, and, going to the door, blew a long, fine free blast, that showed there was no weakness of lungs in her am-

Then the children came out of the forest of corn, out of the crick, out of the loft of the barn, and out of the garden. The men shut up their jack-knives, and surrounded the horse-trough to souse their faces in the cold, hard water, and in a few moments the table was filled with a merry crowd, and a row of wistful-eyed young sters circled the kitchen wall, where they stood first on one leg and then on the other, in impatient hunger.

"They come to their feed f'r all the world jest like the pigs when y' holler 'poo-ee!' See 'em scoot!" laughed Mrs. Gray, every wrinkle on her face shining with delight. "Now pitch in, Mrs Smith," she said, presiding over the table. "You know these men critters. They'll eat every grain of it, if yeh give 'em a chance. I swan, they're made o' India rubber, their stomachs is,

"Haf to eat to work," said Bill, gnawing a cob with a swift, circular motion that rivaled a corn-sheller in results. "More like workin' to eat," put in one of the girls, with a giggle. "More eat'n work "You needn't say anything, Net. Any one that'll eat seven ears-"

"I didn't, no such thing. You piled your

cobs on my plate.' "That'll do to tell Ed Varney. It won't "Good land! Eat all ye want! They's plenty more in the fiel's, but I can't afford to give you yung 'uns tea. The tea is for us women-folks, and 'specially f'r Mis' Smith an' Bill's wife. We're agoin' to tell fortunes by it. One by one the men filled up and shoved

back, and one by one the children slipped into their places, and by 2 o'clock the women alone remained around the debriscovered table, sipping their tea and telling fortunes. As they got well down to the grounds in the cup, they shook them with a circular motion in the hand, and then turned them

bottom-side-up quickly in the saucer, then twirled them three or four times one way. and three or four times the other, during a breathless pause. Then Mrs. Gray lifted the cup, and, gazing into it with profound gravity, pronounced the impending fate.
It must be admitted that, to a critical observer, she had abundant preparation for hitting close to the mark; as when she told the girls that "somebody was coming." "It

is a man," she went on gravely. "He is "Oh, you hush!" "He has red hair, and is death on biled

corn and hot biscuit. The others shrieked with delight. "But he's goin' to get the mitten, that red-headed feller is, for I see a feller comin'

"Oh, lemme see, lemme see," cried Nettie. "Keep off," said the priestess, with a lofty gesture. His hair is black. He don't eat so much, and he works more."

The girls exploded in a shriek of laughter, and pounded their sister on the back.

At last came Mrs. Smith's turn, and she was trembling with excitement as Mrs. Gray again composed her jolly face to what she considered a proper solemnity of ex-

Somebody is comin' to you." she said after a long pause. "He's got a musket on his back. He's a soldier. He's almost here. She pointed at two little tea stems, which formed a faint suggestion of a with a musket on his He had climbed nearly to

the edge of the cup. Mrs. Smith grew pale with excitement. She trembled so she

could hardly hold the cup in her hand as she gazed into it.
"It's Ed," cried the old woman. "He's on the way home. Heavens an' earth! There he is now!" She turned and waved her hand out toward the road. They rushed to the door, and looked where she pointed. A man in a blue coat, with a musket on his back, was toiling slowly up the hill, on the sun-bright, dusty road, toiling slowly, with bent head half hidden by a heavy knapsack. So tired it seemed that walking was indeed a process of falling. So eager to get home he would not stop, would not look aside, but plodded on, amid the cries of the locusts, the welcome of the crickets, and the rustle of the yellow wheat. Get-

ting back to God's country, and his wife and babies! Laughing, crying, trying to call him and the children at the same time, the little wife, almost hysterical, snatched her hat and ran out into the yard. But the soldier had disappeared over the hill into the hollow beyond, and, by the time she had found the children, he was too far away for her voice to reach him. And besides, she was not sure it was her husband, for he had not turned his head at their shouts. This seemed so strange. Why didn't he stop to rest at his old neighbor's house! Tortured by hope as she could push the baby-wagon, the blue-coated figure just ahead pushing steadily, silently forward up the coule.

When the excited, panting little group came in sight of the gate, they saw the blue coated figure standing, leaning upon the rough, rail fence, his chin on his palms, gazing at the empty house. His knapsack canteen, blankets and musket lay upon the dusty grass at his feet.

He was like a man lost in a dream. His wide, hungry eyes devoured the scene. The rough lawn, the little unpainted house, the field of clear yellow wheat behind it, down across which streamed the sun. now almost ready to touch the high hill to the west, the crickets crying merrily, a cat on the fence near by, dreaming, unmindful of the stranger in blue.

How peaceful it was. My God! How far removed from all camps, hospitals, battlenes. A little cabin in a Wisconsin coule, ut it was majestic in its peace. How did he ever leave it for those years of tramping, thirsting, killing? Trembling, weak with emotion, her eyes

on the silent figure, Mrs. Smith hurried up to the fence. Her feet made no noise in the dust and grass, and they were close upon him before he knew of them. The oldest oy ran a little ahead. He will never forget that figure, that face. It will always remain as something epic, that return o the private. He fixed his eyes on the pale face, covered with a ragged beard. "Who are on, sir!" asked the wife, or rather, started to ask, for he turned, stood

"Emma!" "Edward!" The children stood in a curious row to see their mother kiss this bearded, strange man, the elder girl sobbing sympatheticall with her mother. Illness had left the sol dier partly deaf, and this added to the strangeness of his manner. But the boy of six years stood away, ever

a moment, and then cried:-

after the girl had recognized her father and kissed him. The man turned then to the baby, and said in a curiously unpaternal "Come here, my little man, don't you

know me?" But the baby backed away under the fence and stood peering at him "My little man!" What meaning in those words! This baby seemed like some other voman's child, and not the infant he had left in his wife's arms. The war had come between him and his baby-he was only "a strange man, with big eyes, dressed in blue, with mother hanging to his arm, and talk-

ing in a loud voice. "And this is Tom," he said, drawing the ldest boy to him. "He'll come and see me. He knows his poor old pap when he comes nome from the war. The mother heard the pain and reproach

n his voice, and hastened to apologize. "You've changed so, Ed. He can't know reh. This is papa, Teddy; come and kiss him-Tom and Mary do. Come, won't you!" But Teddy still peered through the fence with solemn eyes, well out of reach. He resembled a half-wild kitten that hesitates, studying the tones of one's voice. "I'll fix him," said the soldier.

down to undo his knapsack, out of which he drew three enermous and very red apples. After giving one to each of the older children he said: "Now I guess he'll come. Eh, my little man! Now come see your pap." Teddy crept slowly under the fence, as-

sisted by the overzealous Tommy, and a moment later was kicking and squalling in his father's arms. Then they entered the house, into the sitting-room-poor, bare, art-forsaken little room, too, with its rag carpet, its square clock, and its two or three chromos and pictures from Harper's Weekly pinned about. "Emma, I'm all tired out," said private

Smith, as he flung himself down on the carpet as he used to do, while his wife brought a pillow to put under his head, and the children stood about munching their ap-

"Tommy, you run and get me a pan of chips, and, Mary, you get the tea-kettle on, and I'll go and make some biscuit." And the soldier talked. Question after question he poured forth about the crops, the cattle, the renter, the neighbors. He slipped his heavy government brogan shoes off his poor, tired, blistered feet, and lay out with utter, sweet relaxation. He was a free man again-no longer a soldier under command. At supper he stopped once, listened and smiled. "That's old Spot. I know her voice. I s'pose that's her there in the pen. calf can't milk her to-night, though, I'm too tired; but I tell you, I'd like a drink o' her milk. What's become of Old Rove?" "He died last winter. Poisoned, I guess,

There was a moment of sadness for them all. It was some time before the husband spoke again, in a voice that trembled a little. "Poor old feller! He'd a known me a half a mile away. I expected him to come down the hill to meet me. It 'ad 'a' been more like comin' home if I could 'a' seen him comin' down the road an' waggin' his tail an' laughin' that way he has. I tell yeb, it kin' o' took hold o' me to see the blinds down an' the house shut up.'

"But yeh see, we-we expected you'd write again 'fore you started. And then we thought we'd see you if you did come," she nastened to explain. "Well, I ain't worth a cent on writin' Besides, it's just as well yeh didn't know when I was comin'. I tell yeh, it sounds good to hear them chickens out there, an turkeys, an' the crickets. Do you know, they don't have just the same kind o' crick-ets down South. Who's Sam hired t' help

cut yer grain?"

"The Ramsey boys." "Looks like a good crop, but I'm afraid l won't do much gettin' it cut. This cussed fever an' ague has got me down pretty low. don't knew when I'll get red of it. I'll bet 've took twenty-five pounds of quinine, if 've taken a bit. Gimme another biscuit. I tell yeh, they taste good, Emma. I ain't had anything like it—say, if you'd 'a' heard me braggin' to th' boys about your butter'n biscuits I'll bet your ears 'ud 'a' burnt." The private's wife colored with pleasure. "Oh, you're always a-braggin' about your things. Everybody makes good butter."
"Yes, old lady Snyder, for instance." "Oh, well, she ain't to be mentioned.

She's Dutch." "Or old Mis' Snively. One more cup o' tea, Mary. That's my giri! I'm feeling better already. I just b'lieve the matter with me is, I'm starved." This was a delicious hour-one long to be remembered. They were like lovers again. But their tenderness, like that of a typical American, found utterance in tones rather than in words. He was praising her when praising her biscuit, and she knew it. he had been struck, one ball burning the

back of his hand, one cutting away a lock of hair from his temple, and one passing through the calf of his leg. The wife shuddered to think how near she had come to being a soldier's widow. Her waiting no longer seemed hard. This sweet, glorious hour effaced it all.

Then they rose, and all went out into the garden and down to the barn. He stood beside her while she miked old Spot. They began to plan fields and crops for next year.

Here was the epic figure which Whitman has in mind, and which he calls the "common American soldier." With the livery of war on his limbs, this man was facing his future, his thoughts holding no scent of battle. Clean, clear-headed, in spite of physical weakness, Edward Smith, private, turned futureward with a sublime conrage. His farm was mortgaged, a rascally renter had run away with his machinery, "depart-ing between two days," his children needed clothing, the years were coming upon him, he was sick and emaciated; but his heroic soul did not quail. With the same courage with which he faced his Southern march, he entered upon a still more hazardous

Oh, that mystic hour! The pale man with big eyes standing there by the well, with his young wife by his side. The vast moon swinging above the eastern peaks, the cattle winding down the pasture slopes with jangling bells, the crickets singing, the stars blooming out sweet, and fair, and serene, the katy-dids rhythmically ealling, the little turkeys crying queruously, as they set-tled to roost in the poplar tree near the open gate. The voices at the well drop lower, the little ones nestle in their father's arms

at last, and Teddy falls asleep there.

The common soldier of the American volunteer army had returned. His war with the South was over, and his war, his daily running fight with nature and against the injustice of his fellow-men was begun again. In the dusk of that far off valley his figure looms vast, his personal peculiarities fade away, he rises into a magnificent type. He is a gray-haired man of sixty now, and on the brown hair of his wife the white 18 also showing. They are fighting a hopeless battle, and must fight till God gives them furlough.

-Hamlin Garland, in December Arena.

BITS OF FASHION. Blue-gray and leather-color are oddly

combined in visiting dresses of bengaline and camel's hair. In many of the new elegant dress mantles the wrap and the sleeves are again of entirely different materials. Russian cloaks, princess dresses, ball

wraps, tea gowns and dress jackets are now ashioned from the new Lyons velvet. A very elegant effect is produced upor black cloth suits by the use of delicate gold palms, which are appliqued upon the skirt, smaller ones being applied to the collar

and cuffs of the coat. A new trimming which promises to be come immensely popular with society girl is the tulle suzette, a coarse-meshed black net having a narrow border in black and colors upon one or both edges. This plaited very full is extremely pretty.

Although the season's coats and jackets are cut longer than those of a year ago, the smartest French tailor models are not greatly lengthened. All the stylish coats have high flaring colars, high sleeves, medium in width, but ample enough to go over a dress sleeve without crushing it. The popular trimmings for cloth walkingcoats are elaborate soutache braidings, fur in points, bands and tufts, and very rich applique figures and arabesque in genuine Russian effects.

A very good contrivance for keeping the arms warm on a cold day, when nothing onger than a shoulder-cape is worn, is a simulated sleeve of cloth, kid or chamois cut to button up the back of the arm, or on the inside, to the elbow, the top and wrists being finished with a band of fur matching the pelerine and muff, or often correspond ing with the cloth and fur toque. There are also trim-fitting fur cuffs, through which the hands slip, leaving the upper part of the arm free. The long castor gloves with fur tops are also protective, and these are made much less expensive if the wearer adds the fur bands herself, after the glove are purchased.

A new feature of the house-waist or blouse is the finishing of the neck. For long-necked women extra length is al lowed, and this is used to form a frill around the throat. The material below is drawn by a series of runners to the circumference of the neck, and then the gathering or smocking, which is a feature of most silk blouses, is done frequently in patterns. Women with short necks wear blouse cut considerably longer than is ab solutely needful, the superfluous length being turned over to form a falling collar or frill. The material is gathered to the circumference of the neck, and a piece of stiff lining is hemmed into form the collar-

The necks of some of the art dresses in early English style are finished with a gorgerette, or short ruff of lace, plaited very full and tied with narrow ribbon. These ruffs are used in all colors, as well as in black. On gowns for informal dinners long ruches of fringed silk are passed around the back of the neck and pointed in a V shape in front. Pierrot collars of costly lace, with cufts to match, are worn with demitoilets of every description, and large continental cravats of silk lisse, with real lace ends, are worn with supper jackets, teawas and handsome silk house-waists. Double jabots of lace are very wide at the throat, and taper to a point below the

waist-line. There are productions of the loom so like the expensive Persian lamb-skin that an expert alone could tell the difference. Gray krimmer and black astrakhan are likewise admirably copied, new productions in these trimmings being displayed this week. These imitations in soft silky wool are really in better taste than the host of cheap feather-bands and inferior skins indifferently dyed to imitate more expensive furfor instance, "blue fox," which sold for a song. Gennine blue fox is used only on wraps of great value, but many women walk abroad in the dreadful imitation of "blue fox"-a dyed fur and a dyed blue that would scare any fox who saw it. Of course, blue fox is not blue at all. "It is so called because it isn't," a wise furrier once explained. Few people know the fur when they see it, or have the least idea of its actual value, and as it is neither sable nor seal its price, when given, is invariably provocative of ejaculations.

Longevity and Country Life.

President C. W. Eliot, in the Forum. How great the difference is between ar urban and a rural population in the average of all who die, may be conveniently il lustrated from the registration reports of Massachusetts, which have now been published for forty-seven years. In the thirty years from 1850 to 1880 the average age of all the persons who died in Suffolk county, an urban county on the sea-board, was twenty-three and a half years; the average age of all the persons who died in Barnstable a rural county on the same sea-board, was thirty-seven; in Franklin, an inland rural county, thirty-eight and a half; while the average age of all the persons who died in the island county of Nantucket during the thirty years was very nearly double the average age at death in Suffolk, namely 46.15. The same reports show that the annual death rate is uniformly higher in the densely-populated counties than in the sparsely-populated ones. Other causes besides density of population contribute to produce these striking results; but the main fact remains that a family which lives in the country has a better chance of continuance than one that lives in the city. Moreover, if the family history of the actual leaders, for the time being, in business and the professions in any American city, be studied, it will usually be found that a very large proportion of them were country-bred. The country breeding gives a vigor and an endurance which in the long run outweigh all city advantages, and enable the well-endowed country boys to outstrip all their competitors. Something Better than a Dowry,

Amelia E. Barr, in North American Review. Dowry is an antiquated provision for daughters, behind the genius of the age, incompatible with the dignity of American men and the intelligence and freedom of American women. Besides, there are very likely to be two, three, four or more daughters in a house; how could a man of moderate means save for all of them? what would become of the sons? The father who gives his children a loving. sensible mother, who provides them with a comfortable home, and who educates fully all their special faculties, and teaches them the cunning in their ten fingers, dowers his daughters far better than if he gave them money. He has funded for them a pro-vision that neither a bad husband nor an They grew soberer when he showed where full duty, and every good girl will thankfully so accept it.

READING FOR SUNDAY.

The Toys. My little son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobeyed,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
His mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,

But found him slumbering deep, With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet From his late sobbing wet. And I, with moan, Kissing away his tears, left others of my own; For, on a table, drawn beside his head, He had put, within his reach, A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,

And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art. To comfort his sad heart. So when that night I pray' To God, and wept, and said: Ah, when, at last, we lie with tranced breath,

We make our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then fatherly not less
Than I, whom Thou hast molded from the clay, Thou'lt leave Thy wrath and say "I will be sorry for their childishness."

And Thou rememberest of what toys

Not vexing Thee in death

-Coventry Patmore. International Sunday-School Lesson for Dec 14, 1890. JESUS MADE KNOWN. (Luke xxiv, 28-43, GOLDEN TEXT-And their eyes were opened and they knew him. (Luke xxiv, 31.)

HOME READINGS. M.—Jesus made known.....Luke xxiv, 28-35.
Tu.—Jesus made known.....Luke xxiv, 36-43.
W.—Thomas convinced.....John xx, 19-29.
Th.—Jesus appears to Saul...Aets ix, 1-9.
F.—The veil taken away.....2 Cor. iii, 12-18.
Sat.—Proclaimed through the
Scriptures.......Rom. xvi, 22-27.
Sun.—Revealed to the heathen.Eph. iii, 1-11.

WHAT THE LESSON TEACHES. The Independent.

The revelation of Christ's personality to his two disciples, the subsequent corroboration of their marvelous tale in his own person, and the conclusive test of his reality, follow logically and hinge only upon the courteous invitation to "Abide with us." Imagination may well start before the awful possibilities involved had the invitation not been given and had Jesus

The first lesson is obvious. Hospitality is the Christian's imperative privilege. We do not mean the exotic variety that invites beggars or tramps to hobnob in the home on terms of easy familiarity. That is neither hospitality, charity, nor good sense. But we mean the hospitality that seeks out the homeless and makes them comfortable, that welcomes the hungry and feeds him, and that clothes the shivering wretch under your windows in the snow-storm. It is said that tramps have a peculiar sign that they chalk near the home of the Christian and another that they make near the house of the miser. The one means, Here is plenty and a kind heart; eat, drink and harm not; the other is interpreted. Here is a mean man, and only fit to be robbed of what he

will not give. As the month of December is ushered this physical hospitality is impressed upon our minds in a hundred ways; but the lesson insists more potently on the obligation to spiritual hospitality. The spirit must warm toward spirit, the things of Christ. With urgent entreaties, with never a "nay" for answer, the heart must compel the entrance of all that is lovely and of good report. Character is made effective when, apprehending a new virtue, it takes it storm and makes it its own. Christ hesitates before many a heart in order that the invitation may become more vital and pressing, so that he may be thoroughly ap-

preciated when he does enter. When a polar bear finds the rare food that saves its existence, it tells its young and mate. When Peter found out the Lord he hastened seven miles to tell the rest, Our instinct, when a great joy is come to us, is to share it. Don't repress that feeling! It is a blessed spontaneity. When you have found Christ, tell one, tell all. Don' be ashamed of it. Let others share the rarest joy of your life.

The instinct of man is communicative. It is one he shares with other animals. It can be none the less sanctified. It represents the unspeakable craving for sympa-But it happens not infrequently in early Christian experience that we have become

a changed man without knowing it. We recognize the change, but are unable to classify it correctly. Christ has entered into a life which has been utterly unaware of the heavenly guest. A sermon, a talk, a bit from a book, a touch of the hand, a look, a prayer, a secret session of the soul, and lo! the visitant is discovered of his kingly nature, his loving mission. The speculation as to the exact chemica

composition of Christ's body after his resurrection are apt to be carried a bit too far. We know Christ was real and not a phantom. We know that in some inexplicable way he could eat to support life and yet, apparently, was in no need of such nourishment. It was a state in which the limitations of the body had ceased and will and action were one. Christ was in no state to court familiarity. His mission was to convince man of his victory over death, and, therefore, of the utter truth of his teachings and of their terrible signification. From thenceforward to doubt was to cast him off. That was the time for ocular evidence of one kind. The proof has only shifted along the line of progress. The scientist cannot touch Christ's glorified body; but to those whose hearts burn, ocular proofs are not wanting.

Of General Interest. Two hundred Jewish students of Odessa have renounced their faith and become Christians.

The German Methodists in this country have built and dedicated forty churches since the beginning of the year. Dr. Storrs, of Brooklyn, has just com-

pleted forty-four years as pastor of the Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn. The Baptist Preachers' Meeting of Baltimore is said to have taken action favorable to the taxation of church property. A farm of fifteen acres bordering on the

been secured as a home-rest for returned missionaries. Two national camp-meetings for the promotion of holiness have been announced for next year. Northfield, Vt., June 20 to 29; Linwood Park, Vermillion, O., July 30 to

grounds of Northfield Seminary (Mass.) has

Aug. 10. Four years have elapsed since the students volunteer movement was organized at Mr. Moody's Northfield convention of college students, and in the interval five thousand have pledged themselves to foreign mission work. Of these about 250 are now in the

Some of the priests of the diocese of Ontario, Canada, have decided to appeal to Rome against the acts of Bishop Langevin, who has, they say, punished them for refusing to support the political party of which the Bishop's brother. Sir Hector Langevin, is one of the leaders. Cardinal Taschereau has been asked to forward the complaint to Rome.

Dr. John Hall, of New York, preached last Sunday on the subject of "Premillennium." He said the second coming of Christ was to take to heaven those who loved him. It was a coming for judgment: it was not a coming to set up a throne on earth. It was for "concluding purposes. It was to bring his kingdom in its present form to an end forever. He would then deliver up that kingdom to the Father. If he did not have that kingdom to-day he could not deliver it up. That was the only second advent which the Bible taught.

Thoughts for the Day. A wide-spreading, hopeful disposition is your only true umbrella in this vale of tears.-T. B. Aldrich. There are not good things enough in life to indemnify us for the neglect of a single duty .- Madame Swetchine.

Let us always remember that holiness

does not consist in doing uncommon things.

but in doing everything with purity of heart .- H. E. Manning. Thus grave these words upon thy soul, Hope, Faith and Love; and thou shalt find Strength when life's surges maddest roll, Light, when thou else wert blind.

Sink not beneath imaginary sorrows; Call to your aid your courage and your wisdom; Think on the sudden change of human scenes; Think on the various accidents of war;
Think on the mighty power of awful virtue;
Think on the Providence that guards the good.

-Dr. Johnson Wearing Overcoats.

Philadelphia Record.

Medical Society developed a general agreement that the use of thick and heavy over-coats is indirectly accountable for the very chills that they are intended to prevent. The verdict of the doctors will be found in consonance with the personal experience of most men-of course, excepting those constantly exposed to the winter's rigors—and it explains how many gentlemen as far advanced in years as the venerable Hannibal Hamlin can dispense entirely with a topcoat even in the depth of winter. Ulsters doubtless have their usefulness; but it is exceptional in this climate. Warm underwear is the right theory of dressing, and it has the advantage of permitting greater activity of movement, which is certainly not less demanded in winter time than at

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

other seasons.

Green teak timber is heavier than water, and unless thoroughly seasoned it cannot be The current of the river Amazon is dis-

tinctly perceptible on the ocean for more than two hundred miles from shore. In China less than thirty thousand officials suffice to rule, in a most perfect man-ner, one-third of the world's inhabitants. Labor is cheap in Cevion. The coolies there can live on \$1, or 4 shillings, a month, and are glad to get 1212 cents (about 6d.) a day for their work.

A woman founded daily journalism. The first daily newspaper was the Daily Cour-ant, established in London in 1702 by Elizabeth Mallet, and edited by her. Under two exceptional cases divorce is

allowed in China. The first is: Disobed ence accompanied by insult to the parents of the husband; the second, failure of heirs after the wife has reached a certain A wolf was released at Livingston, Ga., last week, and twenty-one bounds and a

large number of men and boys started in wolf stopped and whipped the whole pack The Turtle clan of the Iroquois claim to

have descended from a fat turtle, which, burdened by the weight of its shell in walking, contrived by great exertions to throw it off, and thereafter gradually developed into a man. A Waldo county (Maine) teacher, besides her school duties, finds time to take care of several sheep, and has carded and spun the wool of four sheep, afterward knitting it

all in men's heavy mittens, for which she found a ready market. When the Russians took possession of Siberia they found it so densely peopled with deer, antelopes, squirrels and other sociable animals, that the very conquest of Siberia was nothing but a hunting expedition.

which lasted for two hundred years. In France at present there are two million households in which there has been no child; 2,500,000 in which there was one child; 2,300,000, two children; 1,500,000, three; about 1,000,000, four; 550,000, fivep \$30,000, six, and 200,000 seven or more. Tradition has it that the natives of Virginia, the first time they seized on a quan-tity of gun-powder, which belonged to the English colony, sewed it for grain, expect-ing to reap a plentiful crop of combustion by the next harvest, to blow away the

whole column. Two young girls in Abbeville county North Carolina, have made two bales of cotton apiece this year, and besides that have supported themselves for some time by their beautiful machine work. They do this regardless of their father's aid, who is a wealthy farmer.

Probably the oldest house in the United States is a decaying stone dwelling that stands at Guilford, Conn. It was built in 1640 and is still occupied. In colonial times it did duty occasionally as a fort, and was a place of refuge for settlers when King Philip was on the war-path. A cork rope is one of the latest inventions. It is made of small corks placed end

to end, and the whole covered with a braiding of cotton twine; over this is a coarser brading in heavy strands. According to the inventor, a one-inch thick rope will stand a strain of 1,000 pounds. The Egyptian papyrus is an acquatio plant, having a stem from three to six feet high. Its soft, smooth flower stem afford

the most ancient material from which paper was prepared. Its flowering stems and leaves are twisted into ropes, and the roots, which are sweet, are used as food. In the Cluny Museum at Paris there is said to be a remarkable collection of footwear. It was made by Jules Jacquemart and comprises more than three hundred specimens of all kinds of foot gear from the

earliest form of the sandal through its various transformations down to the most approved modern ar. cle. Stories of romantic reunions among survivors of the Johnstown flood, who had mourned the others as dead, are constantly appearing. A man and wife who had believed that they had been bereaved by the disaster were recently discovered to each other by a mutual friend in Memphis. After a joyous meeting, the couple went to a new

home in California.

has a beautiful plant of the cactus family, upon which there are now from seven to eight hundred bloseoms. The plant has been trained in such a manner that from its long leaves the hundreds of flowers droop in their crimson beauty so that the whole resembles a floral fountain. At one time there were upward of eight hundred blossoms upon it by actual count. It is hardly credible that on the first introduction of the Chinese tea leaf, which now affords such daily refreshment, or the

Mrs. George H. Corliss, of Newburyport,

fumes make it so popular, or the Arabian coffee berry, whose aroma delights so many, that the use of these novelties should have spread consternation among the nations of Europe and been snathematized by the terrors and the fictions of the learned. A citizen of Jacksonville, Fla., deposited 5,000 oranges in a public place last week and invited passers-by to help themselves to the fruit, only stipulating that the eater should quarter the oranges and place the peel in a barrel of alcohol standing near by.

American tobacco leaf, whose sedative

About four thousand oranges were thus disposed of, to the satisfaction of the donor. who will ship the peeling to Eugland to b used for medical purposes. It was a novel expedient for getting a good job done without expense. Colonists Wanted in China,

President Martin, in the Forum China has room for all her children. It is wrong to suppose that the whole empire is suffering from a plethora of population. Certain districts are over-crowded, particularly on the southeastern seaboard; and from that quarter alone laborers come to this country. Many of the provinces are thinly peopled and call for colonists. Yunnan, with an area of 107,000 square miles, had a population of barely 7,000,000 prior to the Mohammedan rebellion, though highly favored by soil and climate, Since that devastating scourge, the figure must be reduced by half. The same is true of Kweichan, and of Shensi and Kousub, the two provinces of the north west. On the northeast, in what is called Manchuria, are two new provinces, each of them nearly as large as the State of New York, which, excepting a few military posts, present the spectacle of an unbroken wilderness. The government is now endeavoring to attract settlers to that region as the best way to secure it from falling into the hands of Russia. The mamense regions of Mongolia are sure, for the same reason, to be thrown open to settlement at no distant date. At present they are in a condition analogous to that of our

Indian reservations, only more sparsely populated than any of them. The population of China two centuries ago was less than 200,000,000. It is now nearly twice as great, or, to be accurate, about 382,000,000. With the extension of railways and the development of new resources, it might easily double itself once more without any danger of treading on the heels of supply. The actual increase is 4,000,000 per annum-a rate that speaks to the economist of resources still capable of large ex-

pansion. The Best Carriage Horse. H. C. Merwin, in Atlantic Monthly.

Whatever the size of the carriage horse and whatever the use for which be is intended; whether he is to be a big, showy coacher, or a fast-stepping barouche horse, or a useful, medium-sized animal, or a stock one for a brougham, or a showy one for a phaeton, or an all-day nag for a comparatively light carriage and long drives; whether he is to be a horse, a cob or a pony, let him have the ward energy, the out ward grace, and the fineness o. bone and muscle that only a dash of thorough bred or Arab blood can supply. Haif-bred horses -avoiding the angularity of the racer and the dumpiness of the cart horse-are not A discussion on the use of overcoats at a only the most useful, but the most beauti recent meeting of the New York County | ful the world even